

“THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR”

# All The Year Round

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## STRANGE WATERS.

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OVERTURE. II. LINDENHEIM.

CHAPTER VIII. CELIA'S FIRST OFFER.

CELIA woke next morning with a strange sense of dissipation. Three times over she had to say to herself, “I am in Lindenheim, I am in Lindenheim, I am in Lindenheim,” before she could realise the sufficiently extraordinary fact that she was no longer in the close at Deepweald, that it was foreign sunshine shining through the window into a foreign room. But the first thing her eyes fell upon when she woke was the little bunch of violets, standing in the glass of water where she had placed them overnight; and, though they had gone through a great deal of withering since they were first gathered, they still had a little sweetness left in them. They, too, looked dissipated, and very much indeed as if they had been carried away from their home in some sleepy, floral Deepweald. But they were working hard to give out their sweetness to the last, and to adapt themselves no less to a tumbler of strange water than to their native moss; and so, to Celia, each violet was a sympathy.

She lay awake in the sunshine for many minutes, letting her thoughts run about for a little while, before facing another wonderful day. Naturally they ran towards the most remarkable of all her experiences hitherto, and that was Herr Walter. Her knowledge of young men had been hitherto confined to Mrs. Swann's drawing-room, where the Reverend Reginald Gaveston was, beyond all rivalry, the

most interesting specimen among the few who found recreation in reading poetry to a large circle of amateur seamstresses, on hot afternoons. She tried to picture Herr Walter in such a frame, and could not make his portrait fit it in any way. She was quite sure he would be even more out of his element at a Deepweald Dorcas meeting than she herself had been at a Lindenheim picnic. She did not approve of him, and he had managed to offend her a hundred times; and she wondered what he thought of her in return.

After shyly taking her coffee in company with the apothecary's family — worthy people, ruled by a hospitable desire to make everybody comfortable, and a hopeless ignorance of how to do it — she sat down to write a letter to her father. It is to be hoped there are few who have realised at once what that meant to Celia. She had seen letters from her father's pupils, but she had never written one since she was born. Her spelling was by no means a fixed principle, and if it had been, what in the world was she to spell? Ever since that never-to-be-forgotten concert, the distance between her father and herself, never of the closest, had widened and widened; she felt that her presence in Lindenheim was a banishment for her mysterious sins, and that unless she sent him a non-existent chronicle of work he would care nothing for anything she had to say. Is there such a thing as impulsive reticence as well as impulsive out-speaking? At any rate, even her poor powers of imagination could very easily picture her father's eyebrows, as they frowned over an account of a picnic and its frivolities. What would he care about Herr Walter and Fräulein Lotte? It was a strange feeling that such

very real existences were still to him the unknown names that till yesterday they had been to her also; that she already had a life in which he had no part, though it had lasted but a night and a day. But though this was the relation between a father and his only child, it must not for a moment be thought that it gave her any sort of positive pain. She knew nothing of what is commonly meant by such relations, and was not made by nature to guess anything she did not know. She was far too well-drilled a machine for such unmechanical business as guess-work, or to take a conscious view of life as being anything but a mill-horse round of crotchets and semiquavers.

However, she laid open her sheet of letter-paper before her, dipped her pen into her ink-bottle, and wrote, "Lindenheim, Friday." At the end of twenty minutes she had advanced no farther. And, before she could nibble inspiration from the end of her pen, the beaming presence of Fräulein Lotte was in the room.

"Good morning!" said the German girl brightly, and with her constant smile of observant but good-natured amusement at the world and all its ways. She seemed quite like an old acquaintance, so very long ago yesterday seemed to be. Celia coloured, but not without pleasure; she had been getting to feel very helpless all alone over her unwritten letter at the Golden Lion, and very much at sea; and the sight of somebody between whom and herself the ice had already been broken was a sort of relief to her.

"I came to see if I could be of any use to you," went on Lotte. "You seem to be such a wonderfully lonely young person; you put me just in mind of a kitten before it's nine days old, and hasn't learned to see. I wonder why? Your eyes are a great deal too large to be blind. You are writing a letter? Yes, you are just the sort of girl that would sit down and write a letter the first thing. And you will tell everything. Ah, I wonder now what you are going to say! I know there will be something in it about me and Herr Walter, and I should so much like to know, particularly what you are going to say about me. Don't put us together for the love of heaven: of course I'm passionately in love with Herr Walter, as you know, but you needn't tell it to all the world. I am so glad he gave you the violets yesterday. I've quite set my heart on having you for a rival, and not that horrid Ilma. I don't

like rivals who turn up their noses and say nasty things. And one must have a rival, of course; love, Fräulein Celia, is nothing without jealousy and all that sort of thing—nothing at all. I should like to know what you're going to say about us all—about me. Will you show me? I've got it into my head you're one of those unpleasant people who always tell everything and always tell the truth, which would account for your talking so little. They say you English people never do talk, but I've never found it so. Herr Walter is an Englishman. Ah, that's the worst of keeping to truth; it leaves one so little to say, and makes one seem so dull. All the same, I should like to see the truth about myself for once in a way, for the sake of the sensation. Write me down, please, just exactly as I am. But don't, please, say that my tongue runs faster than my wit. Everybody says that, so of course it can't possibly be true. As for Herr Walter, well, you may say what you please. I hope you'll abuse him well, that will show you're going to be in love with him. When you've finished your letter I'll go out with you, and put you in the way of things. I had to learn them myself once. You wouldn't think what a shy girl I was when I first came to Lindenheim; yes, as shy as can be, for nearly two whole days. But I didn't like that sensation, and soon made up my mind not to be shy any more. But there, dash off your letter; I'm keeping you from beginning, and I want you to end."

Celia's difficulties were by no means lessened by having a pair of eyes to watch her, however good-humouredly, as she nibbled her obstinate pen.

"It seems a difficult thing, that letter of yours," said Lotte. "Can I help you? Whom is it to?"

"I'm writing to my father," said Celia.

"Oh, that all! Say you are just going out with a delightful friend named Lotte, and that you'll write more to-morrow. I've been going to write a real long letter to-morrow for—ah, two years now. What an old woman I am getting, to be sure. Ah well! There, write that down; that will do for now."

But Celia's pen did not move, though it had been inspired by ink full three times.

"Herr Walter," said Lotte, "has taught me a great deal of English. I know what 'awful fix' means. It's what you seem to be in now. Come, you might as well get as far as 'My dear governor;'

there's some more of my English for you."

"Oh no," said Celia, aghast at the thought, "that would never do!"

"Isn't 'governor' English for father? What do you call yours? Papa?"

"No."

"What then?"

"I—I don't know what to call him," said Celia, hot with despair.

"Not know what to call your own father? What an idea! What do you call him when you talk to him?"

"I never called him anything."

"Well, that is the oddest thing! Not even when you were a baby?"

"Never at all."

"But, how do you manage, then, when other people are by, and you want to say something to him?"

"Other people are never by. We are always alone whenever I am with him."

"Is he in bad health, perhaps—your Herr Governor?"

"He is never ill. He is the cathedral organist at Deepweald. But he never sees anybody but when he is obliged."

"Gott in Himmel! What a man! You had better write to your mother then."

"I have no mother."

"Ah! Well, to your sister then, or somebody that has got a name."

"I have nobody to write to but my father, mein Fräulein—"

"Lotte, if you please."

"And I have never written to him, and I don't know how."

"Well, that does complicate matters terribly, to be sure. It is an 'awful fix' indeed—and how to help you out of it, I'm sure I don't know. I must ask Herr Walter; he has been at Jena and studied philosophy. But you needn't post your letter for some hours yet, any way. You can write the rest of it, and leave a blank for 'My dear.' I must see your portrait of me. Come, you will never get your pen to go by biting. Give it to me; I will see what I can do. 'My dear'—we're going to leave a place for that, you know. You say you have never written to him before? Then I needn't say anything about the handwriting. I write in German to make you read me very attentively. I am very well, and enjoying myself. I have made a charming friend; her name is Lotte. She is as beautiful as an angel, and plays the piano like a demon. I wish you knew her—or rather I don't, for I don't want a stepmother. Otherwise she

would suit you perfectly, for she hates company, and her only fault is that she is so silent and shy. Her hair is golden and her eyes are blue. I have also made the acquaintance of a young Englishman—Herr Walter Gordon, out of England. He is the handsomest and most amiable young man I ever saw, and we shall be great friends. He, too, plays the piano, though not so well as Lotte. I can't write any more now, for I am going out; but will write a real long letter next time. I send you lots of kisses, and am your loving daughter Celia." There; that's done in no time. Now we'll go to the Conservatorium, and will post it as we go. And there—I have got the truth about myself at last, any way."

Celia looked with all her eyes at Lotte; but there was no longer a twinkle in her new friend's sudden judge-like gravity to show whether this was a joke, or a serious attempt to help her out of her difficulties. But even she could not fail to catch the horror of writing such a letter to such a man. If Lotte had known him she could not have made the discord more discordant; only the word 'governor' was wanted to bring the letter to perfection. If humour—as is said—lies in incongruity of ideas, no better joke had ever been made. Celia, whose sense of humour was very far from being her strong point, and to whom Lotte's peculiar style of talk as yet was Greek, Hebrew, and Chaldee, felt aghast at the thought of such a letter's falling into her father's hands.

"What? Won't it do?" asked Lotte. "We'll show it to Herr Walter, and ask him. He can write letters, I know—that is to say I'm told he can."

"Oh, Fräulein Lotte; no—"

"I'm not Fräulein Lotte; I'm Lotte, and you are a little goose, Celia. As if I'd show Herr Walter anything that would make him vainer than he is already. For he'd swallow the part about himself as easily as an oyster. He's a man, Celia; and a woman's vanity is nothing to a man's. Vanity is sentiment with us, but it's passion with them. We're vain of being admired, but they're vain of admiring themselves. But come, as you won't have my letter, you must write it for yourself, only not to-day."

"Please give me that letter, Lotte."

"Not I. It shan't be wasted. I'll turn 'Lotte' into 'Celia,' and 'plays the piano' into 'sings,' and 'gold and blue' into 'black and brown,' and it'll do for my mother in

Halle just as well as for your father in England. I hate waste, Celia, and letter-paper is dear."

I have said that Herr Walter's most remarkable gift was that of ubiquity. It would therefore have been natural enough that the two girls should meet him on their way from the Golden Lion to the Conservatorium—so foreign singing-schools are called, presumably because they are for the most part such intensely Conservative institutions. But, as it happened, they did not meet Herr Walter.

Helped and guided by Lotte, Celia made her first acquaintance with the inside of her new world. The courtyard that had been the general rendezvous yesterday was still busy in a quiet way; a group of girls sat talking on the rude stone bench by the low, old-fashioned doorway, and other groups were standing or moving about on their way out or in. Many eyes fell upon Celia without the grown-up affectation of not looking, and she was glad of Lotte's company—it took off the rough edge of the stares.

Herr Von Brillen, who was to take her up where her father had left her, was in his class-room smoking a very bad cigar, which he did not remove from his mouth when the girls entered. He was a middle-aged, strongly-developed German, with an imperfectly-shaved face, a full lymphatic figure, and a mass of colourless hair pushed as far back as possible and hiding his coat-collar. His manner was also colourless, and his speech almost painfully laboured and slow.

"Miss March, out from England?" he asked in German English. "I know England. I have gezung there. They bay beautiful—oh, beautiful—but they are behind. Never mind, they will go on. They believe in Mendelssohn; that is the great thing. Who has taught you in England?"

Celia felt half relieved, half sorry, that Lotte had left her alone. She knew her voice would have to be tried, and the presence of an audience of one would have been intolerable; but, all the same, these constant efforts to face stranger after stranger were becoming greater and greater every time. And she had never tried to sing a note except to her father; her voice had never been heard even by Deep-weald.

"My father," she said, in a half whisper, and with an awkward tightening in her

throat that augured ill for the success of her début.

"Your father? I have not heard of him. Is he a professor?"

"He is an organist."

"And zo he has taught you to zing. Very good. Now we will zee. . . . Good morning. There is enough to-day."

It was over at last; she looked round and saw Lotte, who must have come in unseen, and was waiting for her own turn. Lotte nodded to her a smiling au revoir, and she crept out homewards, feeling that all her father's life had been thrown away so far as she was concerned. Never in all her life had she sung so ill.

She made a bold dash, and got quickly through the courtyard. But she was not to escape so easily. Half-way to the Golden Lion she heard Herr Walter's voice behind her.

"Good morning, Miss Celia. Well, and what do you think of us all now?"

That was just the question, what did she think of it all? What does a child think when it first becomes conscious that its cradle is not the whole of the universe? As nobody can remember, nobody can say.

"I think I shall like Lindenheim very much," said Celia, in a tone that meant, "I don't think I shall like it at all; but, after all, what has liking to do with things?"

"Of course you will. I mean you to. I've had pretty well enough of it all myself, but I fancy I get all the fun out of a place quicker than you will. You will work hard, and as there are exactly three hundred and sixty-five ideas in Lindenheim, you will be a whole year travelling from one end of the groove to another. I ran through them all like a spendthrift long ago. I know what everybody will do and what everybody will say. I can tell to a hair's breadth how many sheets of paper the Herr Director will lay on the music-stool to regulate his height to his humour when he plays. You have been with Von Brillen? I can go through your lesson with you note by note, and word by word. When you went into his room he was smoking, and his cigar was exactly an inch and a quarter long—that is the only mystery that keeps me at Lindenheim now, how it is that Von Brillen manages always to keep his cigar at exactly that length, without ever lighting a fresh one or throwing a stump away. Then he laid it down on the highest F in the piano, gave his hair a shake, and said, 'Now, mein Fräulein.' You—let me

see—you felt as if your career had turned to a precipice, and you were standing on one leg on the edge of it, and somebody told you to jump down. Tell me truly—didn't you feel a terrible awe of Von Brillen? Then there goes the first of your three hundred and sixty-five ideas; I assure you you will never feel it again. Then he tried your voice up and down and all over, and when he had done with you he took up his cigar, which had never gone out, and said 'So.' Is not that a photograph for you?"

"Well, I did feel afraid. But he did not say 'So.' He said—"

"Impossible! Von Brillen never finished a first lesson without 'So'—except once, by-the-way, and then he said nothing at all."

"He did say nothing at all."

"But that was to a girl who could sing better than he could teach her. And he said nothing to you? Miss Celia, I must hear you sing. Why, for Von Brillen to say nothing at a first lesson is higher praise than you will ever get if you turn into another Malibran. Yes; I somehow thought you were different from other girls."

That is the most terrible accusation that can be brought against the shy—it is the very secret of their shame.

"You seem getting great friends with Lotte," Walter went on, without noticing the wound he had given her—which, indeed, he was unlikely enough to comprehend. "I am glad of it; she is a wonderfully kind-hearted girl, and as good as gold. Her nonsense doesn't go deeper than her chatter. One gets to know something about girls, you see, in the mixed-up sort of way we live here. I'm glad I met you to-day, Miss Celia, for I'm going to make you an offer. Yes—don't stare like that, or you'll put me out—I mean what I say; a real offer. You have got the right sort of friend, who will keep you alive and won't lead you into mischief, and now you must be kept from drifting into any. There are all sorts of people here, I can tell you. You must have a regular flirtation, one that all the world can see. I've been thinking a great deal about you; you're all at sea in strange waters, and I don't see what else is to be done. So I offer you my services. You must have somebody to give you flowers, and talk to you at concerts, and look after you on holidays; if you don't, you'll be talked about, and if you let everybody flirt with

you all round, that would never do. Ask Lotte if it isn't so. And then, while you and I are together in Lindenheim we will be the most model and faithful pair ever known—and after that we will go our own ways, you to glory and I—well, down the next turning."

Celia had heard of flirtation. The word was not altogether unknown in Mrs. Swann's drawing-room, nor unheard of even at Dorcas meetings. But she had never heard it spoken of as an article of prudence, especially by Miss Hayward. She did not know what to think. Could this brilliant young man—for such he was in her eyes—want in earnest to devote himself to her, Celia March, as the Reverend Reginald Gaveston devoted himself to Bessy Swann? The thought made even her ignorant heart beat. She was not sure she even liked him, and was certainly half afraid of him; but there was sweetness in the thought that she would after all cease to be so utterly unlike all other girls, and that somebody, no matter who, would be at her side to protect her. It was the most infinitely delicate feeling, not even so much as the first faint breath of a possible love-dream. She did not even mistake his offer, as he called it, for anything more than the mere outcome of kind-heartedness that it professed to be. It made her indeed flush and flutter with a new sensation, as one may suppose a copse does on the last day of winter; for, as a mere piece of kind-heartedness, it was a new thing. Whatever it was not, it was a gleam of real sunshine.

"That is a bargain, then," said Herr Walter, a little less lightly and a little more warmly. "I, Walter Gordon, take thee, Celia March, for better, for worse, so long as—we are both in Lindenheim. You shall receive flowers from nobody but me, and I will take care you are never without them. If you ever want advice or don't know what to do, you must come to me or Lotte. You needn't talk more than you like; Lotte and I will take that off your hands. But you haven't said 'yes' yet. Is it a bargain—a match, I should say? Very well—let silence be assent, then," he said with a smile not altogether free from a young man's natural vanity who finds himself, however slightly, a woman's master; he was not yet old enough for the sensation to have lost its rarity, if indeed such a thing ever happens. That feeling in a man's heart

never fails to beautify the plainest girl, and in fact and in truth Celia at that moment looked almost pretty. Spring had touched her, though with the most delicate and airy of wands.

### EARLY WORKERS.

AT SORTING.

"WANTED, Girls for Sorting Paper. Apply immediately."

The fog-coloured canal intersected the district where this notice was affixed; low barges weighed upon the heavy water; poor houses hedged it in thickly; the side that was not muddy towing-path was wharf-ground, and wharf-ground thereabouts being highly rented, expenses were lessened by the lessees underletting standing-places upon it for town cabs, for broken-down omnibuses, for carts, for removing-vans, and so forth. Lime was a substance that barges brought up the canal freely. Hay arrived by the same method; so did corn; so did coal, timber, gravel, and other matters similar. Where there were buildings upon this particular section of the canal-side, too, for storage or for working, the ground-floors of these buildings were used as stables; following upon which came stable sights and sounds, the "swish" of horse-washing, the champing of horses' bits, the kick of hoofs, the scatter of cocks and hens and oats.

Those Early Workers, girls, who were wanted for sorting paper, found it necessary to tread through all or some of this; and found it necessary—since the place or workshop where they were to do the sorting was, like all the rest, the top floor of a stable—to mount a steep wooden, and open, outside stable-stair. Awkward, certainly; primitive, unceremonious; but there was no other difficulty. Admittance was permitted us, kindly and pleasantly; and when the long loft used as the work-shed had been safely reached, the little settlement of sorters was free to be looked at, and all the circumstances, implements, and incidents of their sorting were ready there to the hand. These were rough and simple, just as the surroundings were rough and simple; and the business in hand proved easy enough of comprehension.

The first feature noticeable was the pile of immense tight-full and dirty old sacks; heaped up, one on another, till they mounted nearly to the ridge of the high and open timber roof. This roof, in its big beams and battens, its cobwebs and

crooked nails, was stained and ragged and utterly unpolished and raw; these sacks, or gunny-bags, in their loose, flimsy, much-worn material, were stained and ragged and utterly unpolished and raw; the Early Workers, as they stood at their sorting, could only have been painted in the same grim tints and colours. A rugged picture, consequently, with its "tone" rusty, and with so much of the mellow gloom (or ugliness) of poverty upon it, its greater part was magnificently obscure. It was; yet there was wide space for breathing, for seeing, for doing; and as the girls were not restricted from talking as they worked, the gloom softened after a minute or two, the rustiness paled, there sprang up two or three strokes of colour to vary it. The work-shed, indeed, was so large that it would have done excellently for an initiatory town-hall, or a temporary church; and from its windows there was a capital sweep of air and sky, there was a sight of the canal, with a glimpse, ever and again, of a passing boat. As for the sacks, they were very giants. Each one was vast enough to hold sufficient ground bones to satisfy an ogre, being five or six feet in length, and three feet possibly in diameter, or eight or nine feet in the big stuffed bulk. Then, inside of each was from a hundred to a hundred and twenty pounds of the "sweepings" from the floors of milliners' workrooms and drapers' shops; these were the "papers" to be sorted; and as there were scores of these sacks this made the weight of "sweepings" stored up for the Early Workers amount, in the gross total, to several tons. Truly, if the heart of a little girl of twelve or thirteen years of age quailed, when set down before one of these bundles of rubbish and dust and mystery and conglomeration, the quailing could scarcely be seen with surprise. As the bag's neck was untied, and as its contents tumbled out under the hand, there would come to view (crumpled up, and otherwise deteriorated from prime value) bits of white paper, brown paper, blue paper, other coloured paper; bits of all these papers with the further subdivision of being soft, hard, ruled, written on; bits of that fine foreign "tissue," that is mere phantom, yet tough enough, seemingly, to be bishop's lawn etherealised, and that is used for crunching into odd corners as handy padding. There would come to view bits of cardboard, straw-board, grayish pulpy oatmeal-like board, and the thin wood-board that, when whole, is curved round

into handboxes. There would come to view crusts of bread, lost, after much sucking, by a customer's baby; parts of toys dropped by customers' children; tufts of wadding; clips of straw-plait; ends of window-rubbers; emptied cotton-reels; lengths of tape, binding, gimp, ribbon; coils of string; gnawed bones (left upon the floors possibly by a cat or dog); bottoms of wine-glasses; corks; crockery pieces; bent circles and strips of metal (off ink-bottles and the like); tangles of wire; buttons; chips and cuttings of flannel, silk, buckram, velvet, satin, crêpe, tulle, muslin, lace, net, sarcenet, cuttings of every article, indeed, that millinery hearts delight in, and that millinery genius can transmogrify and devise. Will it not be thought that a sackful of such "sweepings" is a marvellous sackful, with quite enough heterogeneity in one pound's weight of it, without going on till it has reached to a hundred pounds or a hundred and twenty? Yet girls, who shall have been polished up to ordinary skill in sorting, can get through three of these sack-loads daily; and others, again, who shall have been polished up to extraordinary skill in sorting, and who shall possess the genius of energy and application, can work with so much briskness and method that they can undertake four sacks, handling every item in every sack of them, from brim to bottom. It will perhaps be thought these figures are exaggerated. But it is not so; they are true. Even in the humble task of paper-sorting, the Worker's good qualities can affect it; and there can be applied to it that excellent method that makes all tasks go smoothly and easily, that exists in each business, sprung out of its own requirements and experience, and that is always the best source of profit, and wholesome and pleasant for lookers-on to see. In the matter under inspection, the tools are necessarily simple enough, and the arrangement matching. Each Early Worker is furnished with an immense sieve or screen, that might absolutely have been the front of a vast cage, unhinged and laid flat down, an actual yet delusive table; and each Early Worker is furnished with a pretty wide surrounding of coarse brown hampers. That is all. Under the sieve is hung a sack to catch all the dust, and chips, and bits of hay and straw, that fall through; by the side of the sieve is the hundred-weight of sweepings the Worker is to sort; upon the sieve the girl places, from time to time, quantities of the mass she has to sort

out; and from the sieve she picks up each item, and throws it into the particular hamper that is its right receptacle. There are not so many hampers as items, it is evident. For instance, all sorts of millinery and dress-making "cuttings," such as ends of calico, merino, blonde, fringe, and others that have been indicated, would come under the one head of "rags;" and would only have two hampers put for the whole of them, since they would require only the broad distinction of whether they were mixed or white. For another instance, any such items as dry bread, broken china, sucked orange-skins, apple-rinds and cores, and so on, would be massed together as rubbish, and put amongst the dirt and refuse filtering through the screens, to be carted away at convenient seasons and thrown upon a dust-heap. Again, an occasional cinder; a chance stick of fire-wood; a smashed wooden match-box; other smashed wooden boxes that have contained toys, scent, chignons, Paris bonnets, and the like; cotton-reels; useless parts of broken wooden toys; any splinters of any wood, indeed, all come under the one denomination of fuel, and are heaped up together in a common hamper, and kept upon the premises for their proper purpose of lighting fires. On the other hand, minuter differences are made amongst some other of the "sweepings" than might have been thought possible, or of any beneficial service. Red tape, for example, is treated with the distinction—historically and patriotically—due to it. It is carefully sorted off by itself, and has its special set of buyers. These are the poor women who hawk cheap mottled boxes about the streets. They use a very short knot of red tape to tie the lids of their paper-boxes handily behind; they use red tape for side-pieces to their paper-boxes, to hold their lids up handily at one angle in front; they further put a trellis-work of red tape on their box-trays, and up against the inside of their box-lids, to make light and handy division among the property to be stowed away there; and as the profits of the poor women are small and their poverty great, the cash item saved by buying second-hand red tape of a paper-sorter out of "sweepings," is one they cannot afford to overlook. Mention shall be made, also, of mites of paper, no bigger than a shilling or a halfpenny. These have two distinctive hampers of their own; those that are white simply, irrespective of whether they are hard, soft, glazed, or

so on, being dropped into one hamper, and those that are brown or brownish, or that have been written on or printed on, such as scraps of torn letters or circulars, being dropped quite separate and apart into the other. One more example that shall be given is the paper that is brought into the sorting-shed as waste-paper, on that straightforward and solid footing of its own. This is known technically as B, the short for bundle; it is old ledgers, old books, old magazines, old catalogues, old newspapers; it is clean and straight, and in good bulk; and is itself sold, just as it is, for shop purposes, with that public and troublous second life to go through before it becomes "sweepings."

Altogether, the varieties to be on the alert about in paper-sorting are unexpected and interesting. Besides the hampers containing the divisions that have just now had special allusion, each Early Worker has to master those distinguishing characteristics in paper itself that make the sorts known as White Waste, Hard Waste; as Hard Brown, Glazed Brown, Soft Brown, Mixed Brown; and as Mill-board and Straw-board. Mill-board is otherwise called English-board, known in the outer world as card-board, and is the best. The light bright boxes in drapers' and hosiers' shops are made of it; the boxes hold gloves, ribbons, feathers, flowers, tarlatan dresses, some scores of things that can be at once suggested; the boxes split at the corners, the lids can no longer act as lids, and an orderly hand tears the whole thing into four or five fragments, and it is thrown away. When the Early Worker comes to handle these fragments, though, strewn about as they are on her screen or sieve after drawing them out of the gunny-bag, her action cannot be so circumscribed. It has to be doubled; all these boxes, as can be recollected, have neat white-paper flaps, or side-pieces, pasted into them, in order that the delicate goods inside may be protected from the dust; and the Early Worker must strip off this white paper, or she would not be doing her sorting, and the Early Worker must put her box-piece into one hamper, and her paper-strip into another, marking the two varieties of mill-board and white waste. Straw-board covers the exact purpose of mill-board; but being made literally of straw, with only a thin veneer of paper to make it sightly, it is produced cheaper, and is used for cheaper boxes, to hold cheaper commodities. Straw-board boxes have the paper

for flaps, however, on the same method as the dearer goods, and have equally to be stripped of it by the sorter. Of the other sorts of papers we have mentioned, it is only necessary to add that Glazed Brown is the soft, pliable paper for wrapping light goods in, known to the uninitiated as "cap." For the rest the name Hard Paper makes known its qualities; so does Soft; so does Mixed; and it is hardly necessary to say that a distinct line is kept within each, because, when they all reach the paper-mills, each has a distinct purpose, and can be at once carried to its distinct department. "What is the use of being so particular?" is the question on the lips of a good many people; and "What is the use of such rubbish as this?" very quickly follows. In answer, it shall be said that the value of the most careful division is seen, and felt, the moment there is watching of Early Workers at sorting. Further, that the word "rubbish" seems to vanish from the vocabulary, so manifest is it that "rubbish" does not exist, since every item under hand is absolutely wanted, and since there are merchants absolutely waiting to buy up all, and to pay for all, at proper market price. It is the science of adjustment, grown to a good height; rising far superior to that lavish waste that fancies itself so wealthy and so generous, and that is always so full of scorn for what it delights to call the meanness of taking care. And so it comes to pass that when there is seen the collection of metal for metal-melters; the collection of bones for bone-grinders; the collection of string (it is called Mill-string) for poor manufacturers; the collection of red-tape for homely box-makers; the collection of fuel for fire; of rag for rag-merchants; and so forth, it is at once understood that this is development of resources, and not deterioration; that this—being impossible without combination, without cheap transit and exact knowledge—is one of the results rendered possible by civilisation, is one of the results that renders rich reward to civilisation in return, since, by means of it, material is gathered and re-gathered, is used and re-used, requiring therefore much less real replenishment, and leaving no chance either for that prohibiting price that would follow upon scarcity, or for that famine otherwise inevitable.

The wages earned by Early Workers at sorting are sixpence a hundredweight. Those young and untrained girls, wanted at the canal-side, were only getting about

four shillings by the week's end, just because they were young, and untrained, and because there was so much novelty to them in the scraps and shreds they pulled out of the gunny-bags, they could only hold them in their hands, enquiringly and amazed.

"Why! here's a piece of ribbon!" was the cry, as a piece was extricated, and held up to view. "And it's brown! It will do for my hair!" And the announcement startled all the feminine ears within hearing, and caused a look round from everybody, and a piece of general feminine forecast, or imagination. Each girl, it was evident, was mentally decking herself with the discovered treasure, and deciding whether it would be likely to become her.

Another girl shivered, and left off her work that she might shiver better, whilst she wrapped herself up as well as she could in her young arms. "U-u-u-ugh! I'm so cold!" she cried, for she had come to nothing, let it be supposed, but Hard Waste, Small Letter Waste, White Waste, Mill-board slices, Blue, and she had found no attraction in any of it, and no incident.

"Master—isn't it—twelve o'clock—yet?" drawled out a third girl; hungry as well as cold, poor child, over her dead weight of sweepings; and being far ahead of time in her enervating ennui.

For, that the girls should have no interest in their work, was just as retarding as if their interest were too much. Say that they yawned, and lolled, and lounged over crunched paper, trodden box bits, ravelled galloon, and tangled silk; say that they still yawned, and lolled, and lounged through straw-end and gauze-piece, through smashed thimble and discarded nib; as a result, there was the same sloth as if they were absorbed by a remnant of finery. On the other hand, let the girls chase after buttons, and hold the buttons on to their poor shabby frocks to judge of the probable effect; let the girls pounce upon the parings of a bonnet-shape, and stop to wonder what the cut-out size of the bonnet-crown could have been; and they might just as well be losing time by languor and inertness. The conclusion from which is, that the real best Early Workers at sorting are those who have satisfied their curiosity at laces and silk shreds, who are pretty well used to fashionable colours and materials, and are familiar with the series of smooth engravings on

fancy box-lids and spoilt packages. Arrived at this, they have overcome astonishment; and consequently, with regard to the less interesting items of which they have the handling, they can see a piece of string and put it amongst the string, they can see a mutton-chop bone, and fling it amongst the bones, and they have become so magically acquainted with the various descriptions of Glazed, Mixed, Straw, and so on, that they can decide into which hamper the specimens are to be thrown, every bit as rapidly as they can pick them off the screen. To such girls, wages at sorting become a great deal more like what it is pleasant for girls' wages to be. The young people, as has been said, can reduce into order daily three or four hundred-weight of sweepings; the daily wages, therefore, rise to one shilling and sixpence or two shillings, just as the work rises, and the earnings reach from nine shillings to twelve shillings per week. A good prospect, too, have girls who sort. They can become employer-sorters; and can print inviting little handbills of their own, asking for girls to help them, affixing them on to rough and outlying gate-posts belonging to themselves. The "plant" is manageable; the outlay for it small. Given a shed, some sacks, some screens, and the business may begin. The routine, when these are secured, is simply to fetch the sweepings from the shops or warehouses, to get them sorted, to "bag" them, and to send them to the factories, where they are sure of sale. As for the warehouse-owners from whom the "sweepings" are obtained, some who, from the nature of things, do not find it desirable to have accumulation, let the employer-sorters call on them for "stuff," and receive the quantity of a gunny-bagful or two, as frequently as three times a week; other warehouse-owners—notably, one firm of envelope-makers—find it quite enough to clear their premises about twice a year, on which occasions they have as many gunny-bags, packed full and ready, as reach the weight of from twenty to thirty tons. In all cases, the sweepings are stored up "bagged," which leaves nothing to be done where they are bought, except to buy, and to cart them away, two tons forming a cart-load.

The stock of sacks, to do all this bagging and sorting properly, has to be a fairly large stock, it will be seen. So it has. And it is kept at the right available quantity by the constant purchase of old bacon-wraps

and teer-bags (derivation and import unknown), and by the constant transformation of these into the proper shape and size. Indeed, down at the canal-side, where the group of Early Workers were sorting in their shed, it was a curious feature to find this transforming work going on in one dark corner. And it was a no less curious feature, to find that whilst it was girls who were handling Mill-board, Hard Waste, and the rest, the person wielding needle and thread to sew was a man, their overlooker. Women's rights were in peril, surely, from this patent and egregiously audacious infringement. But no. The girls talked and gave their halfLaughs, as they busied themselves with their screens, or yawned over them and loitered, and appeared quite indifferent to the subtle procedure undermining their fair prerogative; whilst the man—unconscious upheaver of heaven-born institutions—stood with old bacon-wraps hung above his head, with old bacon-wraps in a rich sepia-coloured heap at his feet, with particularly rich sepia-coloured old bacon-wraps under metamorphosis in his hand; and steadily went on with his work. He drew his stake-like packing-needle, followed by its tail of grimy twine, through the rough flimsy cloth, stitching two old bacon-wraps together to get size; he stitched the cloth up, when it was thus a largish square, to sack purpose and sack shape, taking no heed of small holes and tatters; and then he added his made sacks to his folded stock at his side, ready to be used when they were required. It was all as natural as if needles were the right chattels of men, and not of women; as if a certain word were altered in the dictionary, and in place of seamstress were written seamster. But sewing, after all, was only the overlooker's occupation in the intervals he had to spare between duties of a more overlooking character. It was for him to sling up a whole grove of full-length empty sacks to the roof-beams, and to be sure which of them was to hold, and was holding, G. B., H. B., L. B., M. B., H. W., O. W., &c., cabalistic technicalities for the varieties of papers we have mentioned; and it was for him to empty the hampers the Early Workers were filling into the right sacks, and to give the hampers back to the Early Workers to get them filled again. When, also, these slung sacks had had their rusty sides rounded to the utmost of their capacity, it was the overlooker's duty to cut them down, and to tuck them

in comfortably at the neck by spreading over the loose contents a piece of paper technically called a "topper." When the overlooker had passed his needle with its tail of string across and across the topper to make all things secure, the operation of bagging was complete, and the bag had only to be removed to that portion of the shed where other filled bags were reposing, there to wait patiently till it was convenient to have a grand carting off to the mill. Other items than paper had other treatment, as may be supposed, according to what they were; Mill-board, for example, being only tied up in a Brobdingnagian bundle of its great flat slices; but the overlooker, not the Early Workers, had this final doing, and was obliged to be smart at it; having a quick comprehension among other things of the odd names in use, which he admitted were "rummy," and which he reflectively considered were "done" that "all things might be made the most of." So there is a chevaux-de-frise of intentional mystification around paper-sorting, simple as the work is, and although the said work is carried on amidst such accessories as the clattering of horses' hoofs in the stalls below; as the storing of horses' harness the other side of a thin partition; as the further storing of horses' oats in the very midst of the bacon-wraps themselves. It can only be said to this that if, after all, mystification makes dignity, and dignity enhances self-respect and the desire to get honourably through honourable labour, then by all means let even paper-sorters have their trade mystifications like their betters.

#### PATIENT.

I was not patient in that oiden time,  
When my unchastened heart began to long  
For bliss that lay beyond its reach; my prime  
Was wild, impulsive, passionate, and strong.  
I could not wait for happiness and love,  
Heaven-sent, to come and nestle in my breast;  
I could not realise how time might prove  
That patient waiting would avail me best.  
"Let me be happy now," my heart cried out,  
"In mine own way, and with my chosen lot,  
The future is too dark, and full of doubt,  
For me to tarry, and I trust it not.  
Take all my blessings, all I am and have,  
But give that glimpse of heaven before the grave!"

Ah me! God heard my wayward, selfish cry,  
And taking pity on my blinded heart,  
He bade the angel of strong grief draw nigh,  
Who pierced my bosom in its tenderest part.  
I drank wrath's wine-cup to the bitter lees,  
With strong amazement and a broken will;  
Then, humbled, straightway fell upon my knees,  
And God doth know my heart is kneeling still.

I have grown patient; seeking not to choose  
Mine own blind lot, but take that God shall send,  
In which, if what I long for, I should lose,  
I know the loss will work some blessed end,  
Some better fate for mine and me, than I  
Could ever compass underneath the sky.

### POOR LITTLE GEORGY.

#### A STORY IN TWO CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

Poor little fellow! The first time I ever saw him was at Antwerp. We were staying—my wife and I—at that most comfortable of all comfortable hotels, the St. Antoine, on our way to our favourite little gambling-place, Sitzbad-bei-die-Saltzbrunnen, and there had encountered a very dashing young widow. Not absolutely pretty, perhaps; indeed, my wife, who is by no means so callous to female charms as most of her sex, would never allow her any share of good looks at all. Still, if not pretty, she was decidedly what you would call pretty-looking, and with a good share of that sort of fascination about her which, while it seems infallibly to arouse the hostility of her own sex, not unfrequently goes farther even than beauty itself in subduing ours. The former result it produced in the present instance with remarkable punctuality, and no less remarkable reciprocity. Mary and she were, I verily believe, sworn foes long before the first entrée made its appearance on M. Frédérique's well-furnished table-d'hôte, the very first day the fascinating widow made her appearance there as our vis-à-vis. How far, under other circumstances, the second might have followed, I cannot say; though certainly, for some two or three days, the fair foe showed every disposition to make the essay. Whether it was an instinctive desire to carry the war into the enemy's country, or whether it was simply that I happened to be the youngest and most flirtable man of the company, I cannot say; but there was no denying the fact, that the fascinating widow promptly responded to Mary's not very well-concealed hostility, by an altogether unconcealed attack on Mary's husband. Two things, however, combined to avert what might otherwise have been the issue of this interesting little struggle. In the first place, I happened to be very much in love with my own wife, and therefore not quite so susceptible to such attacks as under other circumstances I might have been. In the second, an event very shortly occurred which altogether changed the

enemy's tactics, and turned her arms in quite a different direction.

This event was no other than the appearance at the table-d'hôte of a tall Englishman, well-bearded, handsome, aristocratic-looking, and—alone. Alone, that is to say, in the sense of being unhampered by any feminine encumbrance. His one companion was a boy; a slight, delicate-looking lad about seven years old, evidently his son. Both were in deep mourning—it was easy enough to guess for whom—and the evident love of the two for each other; the perfect freedom and confidence of the child; the quaint mixture of masculine clumsiness and more than womanly tenderness with which the big, brown-bearded, sunburnt man watched over and tended his fragile little charge; above all, the wistful look which every now and then stole into the honest gray eyes if the boy's prattle ceased for awhile, or turned off suddenly in some direction in which for the moment he could not follow it, were inexpressibly touching. Mary fell in love with him on the spot. So apparently did the widow. For a time I almost feared that the conflict which had begun over my unworthy carcase would be continued over the body of the interesting new-comer, and I was by no means sorry when the next morning's mail brought the letters for which we had been waiting, and enabled us to continue our journey to Sitzbad-bei-die-Saltzbrunnen.

As fate would have it, however, it proved that we had by no means seen the last of our new acquaintance even then. When I had last had the doubtful and very unsought honour of a tête-à-tête with Mrs. Mortimer Windham, that fascinating personage had confided to me—not without a tender hint that I might, if thereto irresistibly impelled, avail myself of the information—that she herself was on her way to Baden-Baden. Apparently, something had since occurred to alter her destination.

We had been rather less than a week at Sitzbad, and were strolling one morning up and down the sunny terrace before the Kursaal, admiring the broad sweep of turf with its masses of brilliant bloom, set off by the dark foliage of the long row of orange-trees placed at regular intervals in their huge green tubs along the open balustrade, when suddenly I felt the tiny gray-gloved fingers close on my arm with a vicious little pinch, and looked down in astonishment for an explanation of the unexpected assault.

"Dick!" cried my wife, looking up in her turn with the nearest approach to a frown I have ever yet seen on her pretty face, "you told me a fib. If there isn't that horrid woman here again!"

I really believe it was a relief to her mind when Mrs. Mortimer Windham swept past us with something so very nearly approaching the "cut direct," as to make it pretty clear that, whatever might be the motive of that lady's change of route, it could at all events have been determined by no intended attack upon our domestic peace. In another minute she had disappeared up the steps of the Kursaal, and Mary's ruffled feathers settled down again. By-and-by, we too strolled into the play-room, and there was the widow sure enough, deep in the game; now pushing a little pile of florins on to the black or red, now raking them off again with the business-like nonchalance of your thorough-paced punter, or pricking off the result upon her card as her stake disappeared among the long rows of coin which waxed and waned each moment under the deft fingers of the employés; with as little outward manifestation of emotion as though florins and fredericks had been so many counters, just serving to mark the progress of the game. We stood watching her for half an hour at least, and by the end of it I could see that, as far as I was personally concerned, my little wife's mind was altogether at rest. And certainly there was little enough of fascination about the widow then. It must be a very lovely face indeed that can preserve much of its loveliness under the influence of the roulette.

Somewhat to my surprise, however, as the hands of the clock pointed to one, Mrs. Windham, who for some little time had been winning almost every coup, suddenly abandoned the game in the very height of her "veine," and sweeping up the little pile of gold and silver which had accumulated before her, turned her back resolutely on the table and glided swiftly from the room.

"What the dence is up now?" I could not help exclaiming as again the little ball leaped rattling into a fresh cell, and the employé's monotonous cry, "Vingt-cinq—rouge, impair et passe," proclaimed, even as she passed the door, that rouge, on which the fair deserter had already won six times in succession, had again turned up for the seventh time.

"What is it, Dick?" asked Mary, a

little distrustfully again. "You are not wanting to follow that—"

"By Jove, pet, but I am though. She's too old a hand to break off in the middle of a series like that for nothing. Come; I'll bet you a dozen of gloves she either has an appointment or—"

"That poor nice man with the little boy!" broke in Mary, excitedly. "Of course it is, and that's why she's here."

And away we both went, to verify our suspicions; the last sounds that fell on our ears, as we left the room, being the "clickety, click-click" of the little ball, and the stereotyped cry, "Rien ne va plus! Douze—rouge, pair et manqué," which told of a fresh sacrifice on the widow's part on the unknown altar of which we were in search.

We tried the terrace first, but she was not there; so we harked back to the reading-room. As we entered she looked up quickly from behind the paper she was to all appearance assiduously studying, and something very like an expression of annoyance passed over her face, as she instantly dropped her eyes again and went on with her reading. You may be sure that Mary's quick eyes caught the look in a moment, and, with a little squeeze of my arm, she too dropped into a chair, and, taking up the first magazine that came to hand, set herself quietly to watch the dénouement.

We had not long to wait. Before ten minutes were out, the door opened again and a couple of visitors entered, loudly discussing the extraordinary run upon rouge, which even yet, it appeared, had not come to an end; and again the expression of annoyance crossed the widow's face more strongly than before; and she half rose from her seat, as though unable to resist the temptation of returning to the table. But, even as she did so, the door opened for the third time, and she had but just time to sink once more into her seat and resume her unconscious studies as our tall friend of the St. Antoine strolled in, his little boy, of course, by his side.

I will give you a twelvemonth to find among your kinsfolk and acquaintance a little woman more ready than my Mary to hear reason, or more prompt to give up her own wishes in favour of those of her lord and master, even when unconvinced. But, for all that, I had no easy task, during the three remaining weeks of our stay at Sitzbad, to keep her from "exposing that abominable woman" in the eyes of that

poor nice man, whose wistful tenderness to his motherless boy had made such an impression on her soft little heart. The season, never very brilliant at Sitzbad, was that year unusually dull, and the few visitors who did put in an appearance were thrown more than commonly together. I am bound to admit that Mrs. Mortimer Windham's unceasing endeavours to keep us and the poor nice man apart were quite as earnestly, if not as ably, seconded by my own. As a mere male creature, however great my interest in Sir George and his boy—and I was very much interested in both—I was much less concerned with any scrape, matrimonial or otherwise, into which he might contrive to get himself, than with the keeping of my own warm-hearted little wife out of anything like "a row." I should have been quite as glad to get her away to Switzerland, or the Black Forest, or even that weary old Rhine, as the widow would have been to carry off her brown-bearded quarry to Homburg or Baden-Baden. But our holiday was pledged to be spent with an old friend, who was a fixture at Sitzbad for another six weeks at least, and, as for Sir George, a course of the salt baths had been prescribed for little Georgy, and nothing short of removing the salt-springs themselves could stir him from the spot, until that course should have been thoroughly carried through.

As for our remaining in the same place without becoming acquainted, Master Georgy himself settled that question very summarily. If, as he afterwards confided to me, Mary's eyes were exactly like his mamma's, I can only say that his mamma must have been, in that respect at all events, very fortunately endowed. But, like or unlike, they fascinated him with remarkable promptitude; and Mrs. Mortimer Windham had hardly found time to recover from her first bashful surprise at the unexpected meeting before he had sidled quietly up to Mary's chair and, happily independent of any previous ceremony of introduction, presented her with a whole handful of the very *Gloire de Dijon*, with regard to which she had only that morning been freely breaking the tenth commandment, if not even meditating a small infringement of the eighth.

"I didn't steal them," he explained, "the gardener gave them to me," and then the young monkey caught en passant the merry glance which answered mine, and, after considering me gravely for a

moment, turned again to Mary with, "You may give him one if you like."

Well, as I have said, it was for once a real relief to me when the time came to leave Sitzbad. Not that anything went wrong. My old friend—that venerable relation to whom I introduced you when we visited Spielbad - super - Mare,\* not long ago—was jogging on in his accustomed track, rather in luck just then, and punishing the local Blanc to an extent which kept us in champagne luncheons, and picnics, and little trips to Frankfort and Homburg, and so forth, without any need to trouble ourselves as to the question of cost. As usual, he insisted on furnishing the small capital necessary to enable me to follow his example, and, as usual also, I found myself, after the usual ups and downs, in ultimate possession of quite enough to cover all expenses of our journey and keep house for a week or two on our return. Yet with all this I have rarely been so glad to get away from any place as I was then to get away from Sitzbad. And happily we did get away without an explosion. We were terribly near it, however, several times.

Once in especial Mistress Mary must needs take advantage of my absence in Frankfort to spring a mine of a very deadly description. Sir George, thoroughly English in all things, was particularly so in his objection to gambling. Indeed the only point in which he was not thoroughly English was in his carrying that objection to the extent, not only of thinking it wrong in other people to yield to the seductions of the tables, but of actually resisting them himself. Now Mrs. Mortimer Windham was a gambler as ingrained as my good old friend himself, though of an altogether different type. The one played for amusement, risking no more than he could afford, and finding that one year with another his daily amusement, with all its incidental little enjoyments, cost him about a hundred and fifty pounds per annum. The other was, as Count Carambole would have said, an *enragé*, and had it occurred to the proprietors of the table—as it no doubt would have occurred to those worthy gentlemen had there been any pecuniary possibility in it—to make souls a legal tender upon their tables, would no doubt have staked hers, with

\* ALL THE YEAR ROUND, New Series, Vol. 16, p. 319, "Spielbad-super-Mare."

perfect equanimity, against whatever little sum in francs or gulden might have been assessed as its equivalent. As for going a whole month without playing, and that with money in her pocket, and actually within hearing of the never-ending injunction to "Faire le jeu," that of course would have been simply impossible. Happily for her, however, young Master Georgy's baths and walks and other regimen fully occupied the entire morning, and during that time, and for the last hour or two of the evening play, when Sir George was safe in his hotel, she was able to indulge without fear. It was this latter period that Mistress Mary fixed upon for her little exposé; and considerable was the effect produced as she and Sir George unexpectedly strolled in just as the presiding employé of the roulette announced "les trois derniers coups," and found madame hard at work. Had they arrived ten minutes earlier the effect would, as I afterwards learned, have been greater still. Almost to the very last Mrs. Windham had been in luck that night, and, a very short time before, Sir George would have found her at the head of a little battalion of louis, the methodical arrangement of which would have proclaimed the practised punter even more loudly than their number. Just at the last, however, her luck had left her, or rather had taken another form, for assuredly it was by no ill fortune of hers that Sir George arrived only in time to see the last pile of the battalion swept in by the rake of the remorseless employé, and to be easily cajoled by the pretty little confession of how she had been tempted just for once to try her luck and lost—with a moment's pause to recall the exact sum before her when Sir George entered—three whole napoleons.

So Mary, innocent little plotter that she was, and quite unskilled in that line of business, was simply hoist with her own petard. If Sir George had a weakness, it was perhaps that of a slight tendency to be didactic, and the widow's pretty penitence only drew him more closely towards her. I, as you may suppose, "put my foot down" very decidedly as to any further attempts; and Mary, though half disposed to look upon me as a monster of cold-blooded policy, was much too good a wife to think of acting in opposition to a plain wish. So for the rest of our stay the widow had the course pretty much to herself, and made running accordingly.

Even to the last, however, when we had all learned to look upon it as a settled thing—"it," of course, meaning the promotion of Mrs. Windham to the honours and emoluments of the late Lady Arlingham so soon as the second year of Sir George's widowhood should have come to a close—Sir George's own confidence in the fascinating widow seemed hardly to have made the same progress as his other feelings towards her.

It was the last evening of our stay, and I was in the very height of an argument with my good old friend as to the propriety or otherwise of cutting short my play, while still actually the winner of a good dozen of louis on that day's sitting, merely because I had for the time lost back again that other dozen of which an hour before I had also succeeded in mulcting the administration, when the discussion was brought to a close by the appearance of Sir George with a disturbed expression upon his face I had never before seen there. That evening's post, it appeared, had brought him letters which had troubled him greatly. Nothing indeed was as yet absolutely settled, but it seemed more than probable that within another week he would be called upon, in a manner which admitted of no honourable evasion, to undertake a task involving absence from Europe for at least many months.

"Oh, poor little Georgy!" cried Mary, with instinctive sympathy. And then it all came out. He was in terrible trouble about the boy, who, though to some extent benefited by the Sitzbad "cure," was far too delicate to face such a journey, even had other considerations allowed Sir George to think of taking him. If any really trustworthy person could be found to take him in charge, the father would set off on his mission with a comparatively light heart. And he could afford to pay liberally for the service. He would willingly give at the rate of five hundred pounds a year, nay of one thousand pounds if that were all, could he but— Whereon Sir George, who in some ways was the shyest of men, began to stammer a little. Did Mrs. Felix think—. If such a thing could be made possible—. He hoped he might not be misunderstood—

And here my host, whose attention had returned to the table, struck in with:

"There, my boy, what did I tell you? Vingt-sept again! You'd have made a hundred louis by this time."

Whereon a slight frown gathered on Sir

George's face, and his stammering fit departed, and with it also departed the evident intention with which he had so far been possessed, of asking us to assume the care of little George. Poor man! he had quite forgotten for the moment, in his anxiety, that the husband of the dear little woman to whom the boy had taken so strongly, and whose eyes at times reminded him too of those of his dead wife, was a gambler.

"Dick!" cried Mary, suddenly, the next morning, stamping her little foot in as near an approach to downright anger as I have ever seen her achieve, "he'll leave him with that woman; see if he doesn't."

"Poor little fellow," I answered; "I hope not."

"Poor little fellow, indeed!" she said, and then sat silently looking out of the window all the way to Frankfort. She had grown very fond of little George, as indeed had I. And it must be owned that the prospect was not satisfactory.

But what could we do?

#### TOURNAMENTS AND TEA.

IN TWO PARTS. PART II.

As the name of Montgomerie is associated with the terribly real tournament of 1559, so is it with the gorgeous sham at Eglinton Castle two hundred and eighty years later. Gabriel Montgomerie, Captain of Lorges, killed Henry the Second and tilting together with one clumsy stroke of his shattered lance; and Archibald William Montgomerie, some time Earl of Eglinton and Winton, and of many other earldoms and lordships, tried hard to galvanise tournaments into life again. In organising the show and carrying out his plans, the hospitable and dashing owner of those high-mettled racers, Blue Bonnet and the Flying Dutchman, spent, it is said, no less than two years of anxious thought and forty thousand pounds sterling. It is difficult, at this distance of time, to realise the feelings which incited an active and popular nobleman to actually impoverish himself, for the sake of holding a week's merrymaking at his castle in Ayrshire. Being of a hearty, jovial disposition, and the most popular young nobleman of his day, perhaps he did not count the cost. Possibly a long peace had inclined the human mind towards war. In a quarter of a century people have time to forget the realities of war—the loss of relations and friends, the dear

bread, the heavy taxation—and at the end of that period see only the glory, and the tattered flags and bruised arms hung up for monuments. My friend Professor Nebelwitz, who has a keen scent for the causes of things, declares that to him the great Eglinton tournament is sun-clear; that to the eye of the philosophic historian it appears as an aristocratic protest against the Chartist agitation; that it was a great gathering of nobles, a counter-demonstration to the public meetings, processions of trades, petitionings, and other paraphernalia of Chartism; that it must be read by the light of the duel between Lord Londonderry and Mr. Grattan, blustering and bloodless. This may be sound doctrine, but to the ordinary mind it is difficult to imagine any more connection between Mr. Frost's agitation and Lord Eglinton's show than between the latter and the murder of Mr. Westwood, the victory of Bloomsbury amid a snow storm on the Derby day, or the famous dead-heat for the St. Leger between Charles the Twelfth and Euclid. Perhaps the great Scottish novelist and the romantic school founded by him are responsible for the tournament of 1839; which appears to have been modelled very much on the programme set forth in *Ivanhoe*, revised and corrected by M. Champollion's version of *Les Tournois du Roi René*. There was a good deal of the quality now called "go" about the third decade of our century. It was the age not only of d'Orsay and Chesterfield, but of Waterford and M. P. Gully, and the amusing drama of Tom and Jerry had not ceased to represent life in London. The high spirits of the gilded youth had to find vent elsewhere than in the hunting-field, the steeple-chase, or that peculiar species of "mill" which, as Tom Hood humorously tells us, had Mendoza for a miller.

The idea of a modern tournament having taken possession of Lord Eglinton, that nobleman soon discovered that however much money he was prepared to disburse, he would require hearty co-operation from his brother nobles in order to secure a good attendance of combatants. It would be unfair to hint that many of the knights looked forward to the day of combat with some misgivings as to the safety of the exercise, but it is hard to see what other construction can be put upon the endless precautions adopted, and interminable rehearsals gone through, by the prospective tilters. Here at once

was established an important difference between the knights of ancient and modern times. The former merely practised at a tournament the warlike exercises to which they had been accustomed from their youth upward, while the latter had everything to learn, and knew as well how to manage a lance as a boomerang. To the end that the jousts might not end either in serious accident or ridiculous failure, it was deemed well to establish a practising-ground, near London, where the intending combatants might practise and flounder about, without the dread of bright eyes looking on and laughing at their blunders. The Eyre Arms, then described as at the top end of St. John's-wood, was a secluded spot, but not remote enough to escape the notice of the not yet fully-developed special correspondent. The wonderful being who, according to Hans Breitmann, astonished the gods of Valhalla—

A wondrous child who makes us shware  
For hop what may he's always dore—

was as yet only called a reporter, but his eyes were quite sharp enough to pierce the leafy screen which the embryo knights fondly thought would protect them. On Wednesday and Saturday afternoons regular rehearsals took place, thus commented on by the scribe of the period: "We believe next Saturday will be the last day of the exhibition of the mimic knights and esquires, at least it is so understood at present; though if these doughty men-at-arms are not a little more au fait when the tournament takes place, they will be miserably defective in their imitation of the knights of the olden times. Yesterday the tilting feats were performed by Lord Glenlyon, the Hon. Mr. Charteris, the Marquis of Waterford, the Hon. Captain Gage, the Earl of Eglinton, and the Earl of Craven, all of whom appeared in full suits of armour, very grand and almost as fierce as the men in armour which ride in the Lord Mayor's show. Lord Gage presided as Marshal of the Lists, and kept order among the jousters. The Marquis of Waterford was thrown from his horse, and rolled ignobly in the sand and sawdust of the course, but received no injury; indeed the armour is protection, to a certain degree, from broken bones, although it is said several accidents have already occurred from the awkwardness of the parties employed. Be that as it may, there were no serious accidents yesterday,

and the whole business went off as such things usually do, somewhat dull, and altogether silly. There was a group of attendants, dressed like the buffoons at St. Bartholomew fair, who were no doubt intended to represent the retainers of the jousting knights; these worthies held the horses, kept the doors, and, with the assistance of a policeman, were in that respect a very efficient force. The tilting consisted in each knight riding at half-speed at the figure of a knight in armour, a sort of iron scarecrow, mounted on a wooden horse, and placed on small truck wheels on an inclined plane. This 'dummy' knight, on being let loose, rattled along his railroad grooves for the length of fifty yards, whilst the real earnest knight-errant rode fiercely at him in his transit, and strove to knock him out of his saddle at the point of the lance. 'Dummy,' however, proved in the long run the best man of the lot, and sat with imperturbable patience while all the chivalry of the Eyre Arms attacked him in turn; he remained unscathed, and looked as much like a stalwart warrior as any of his antagonists."

Thus early, then, the arrows of scorn were levelled at the bogus chivalry of 1839, but this tone of persiflage was by no means universally adopted. As the session of Parliament approached its end, the ministerial, fashionable, and local newspapers became full of notifications of the tournament, set for the last days of August and the first of September. With an eye to the general effect, it was requested that ladies and gentlemen coming to the tournament would dress in costumes of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries—a wide margin for the display of taste and fancy—and that farmers and others would appear in Scotch bonnets and plaids. The Irvine Toxophilite Society and the Ayrshire Archers busied themselves in getting new uniforms, and Lord Glenlyon determined to appear at the head of a hundred of his men. The pages of the *Morning Post* became full of suggestions "How to dress for the tournament," for the most part recommending a study of Chaucer; one humorist quoting the costume of the wife of Bath, as most deserving of imitation. It is not recorded that anybody took advantage of the opportunity to appear as the wife of Bath, but a great many costumes did undoubtedly make their appearance. The guests of the Earl of Eglinton arrived at the castle in the last week of August, and preparations went on at a

furious rate. Immediately behind the castle was erected an enormous wooden pavilion, containing a banqueting-hall large enough to accommodate five hundred guests, and a ball-room of corresponding size. This supplementary building, covered in with canvas, was in all three hundred and twenty-five feet long; and was made absolutely necessary by the want of accommodation in the castle. Beyond this, and by a bridge over the Lugdon, wound the serpentine walk, laid off as the route of the knights and their following to the tilting-ground, a huge space enclosed by vast galleries. The space inside the lists was six hundred and fifty feet long by two hundred and fifty wide. The grand-stand is described as having been a most conspicuous object, carved and gilt in the Grecian style in front—many of the decorative gildings having been used at her Majesty's late coronation in Westminster Abbey. What would Mr. Ruskin say to this, I wonder? Heaven defend us! Greek decorations at a tournament of the fifteenth century, and not only there, but actually in Westminster Abbey as well! Verily the decorators of the early Victorian period have much to answer for. Beside the grand stand and numerous other stands, and at the end of the lists, were pitched the pavilions of the knights; and all Scotland, mindful that no such festival had been seen in Scotland since the visit of George the Fourth, is supposed to have prayed for fine weather. Still the voice of the scoffer was heard between whiles. It was gravely reported that the wild young Marquis of Waterford had not been lodged at Eglinton Castle, but billeted, as it were, at a young ladies' boarding-school. Moreover, the Sheriff of Ayrshire had been set on by some wicked wags to protest against the tournament, as dangerous to life and limb, and downright unlawful; in fact, as many degrees worse than bull-baiting, cock-fighting, prize-fighting, badger-drawing, and other manly amusements of our ancestors; and, moreover, as smacking of popery—not to say downright heathenism and devil-worship. Lord Eglinton was obliged to prove to the worthy sheriff that the sport was absolutely without danger, before he would allow it to proceed, and this demonstration provided the ribald with another sneer. Of course the keen, hard-headed Ayrshire peasantry determined to make a good thing of it. As streams of visitors poured towards Eglinton Castle, not only did that edifice

become full to the roof, but the towns and villages of Irvine, Saltcoats, Kilwinning, and the farms and out-houses adjoining, might have been compared to a beleaguered district, wherein hosts of mankind, compressed into the smallest possible space, were glad to find any corner in which to bestow themselves. Accommodation for man or beast rose from five hundred to a thousand per cent., houses were let for from ten to thirty pounds for the tournament week, and single beds in the second-best apartment of a weaver's domicile were retailed for ten shillings or a pound per night, while the master and mistress of the household, with their little ones, coiled themselves up in any out-of-the-way corner as best they might. Stables, byres, sheds, every inch of covered space was occupied. On the Monday preceding the 28th August, two very notable personages arrived at Eglinton Castle—to wit, Prince Louis Napoleon and Viscount Persigny; and the "Regulations for the Tilting" were at last issued. These appear to have been drawn up to satisfy the uneasy conscience of the sheriff of Ayrshire. They were as follows:

1st. No knight can be permitted to ride without having on the whole of his tilting pieces.

2nd. No knight to ride more than six courses with the same opponent. Particular attention is most earnestly requested to be paid to this injunction, for the general good and credit of the tournament.

3rd. It is expressly enjoined by the Earl of Eglinton, and must be distinctly understood by each knight, upon engaging to run a course, that he is to strike his opponent on no other part than his shield, and that an atteinte made elsewhere, or the lance broken across, will be judged foul, and advantages in former courses forfeited.

4th. Lances of equal length, substance, and quality, as far as can be seen, will be delivered to each knight, and none others will be allowed.

Next day came a deputation from Storr and Mortimer's with waggon-loads of plate for the great banquet, which was to conclude the first day's jousting, and the spirits of all rose as the weather, which had been fretful for some days past, suddenly became warm and bright. On the eventful morning, however, a few disquieting clouds made their appearance, but the immense numbers gathered in this

corner of Scotland were not to be deterred by weather. Before noon, the galleries in the lists were filled, mostly by guests in Scottish and mediæval costumes, and on the stands and around the lists were congregated at least thirty thousand spectators. Every eye was eagerly strained to catch the first glimpse of the procession, but just as it was about to set out from the castle the rain began to fall, not a summer shower, nor a Scotch mist, nor an Edinburgh "haar," "no stinted flood, no scanty tide," but a genuine straight, heavy downpour. The assembled thousands, albeit accustomed to humidity, were sorely disheartened. The comparatively small number of grandes shut in the stand were partially protected, but neither availed plaid, umbrella, nor overcoat aught to the hapless crowd of outsiders. Thousands were drenched to the skin, and went home wet and wroth, while others, less regardful of weather, crowded their bedraggled forms together, and wondered when the procession would set out. Dismal pleasantries were exchanged, and it was hinted that the men in armour were afraid of getting wet, lest they should be "rusted in." As the afternoon wore on the rain abated a little, and the cavalcade came in sight. All witnesses agree that this part of the show was excellently managed, and, bating the rain, a complete success. The line of march was kept by mounted men-at-arms at regular distances, assisted by the retainers and halberdiers of the Lord of the Tournament—the Earl of Eglinton—attired in his livery of blue and gold. First came men-at-arms in half-armour; musicians in parti-coloured costumes of silk, like unto those in which a man looked as if "one half of him was burnt with St. Anthony his fire;" and trumpeters in full costume, brilliant with banners and trumpets; the Eglinton herald, his pursuivants and two deputy marshals, all duly attired in tabard and surcoat, all embroidered and emblazoned with the arms of Eglinton. From scores of banners and broad shoulders shone the golden fleur-de-lys of Montgomerie, the red annulets of Eglinton, and the figure of gentle Hope, apparently about to throw the head of a dead savage to a couple of those mysterious animals known to heraldic folk as *wyverns*. Far and near, those who ran could read the strange motto of a warlike race, "Gardez bien," more befitting the sheriff of Ayrshire than those who had borne it proudly through many

fighting generations. Next to the herald came the Judge of Peace, that good old soldier the late Earl Saltoun, on his horse, richly caparisoned; and then more retainers, halberdiers, heralds, and so forth. Then came the Knight Marshal of the Lists, Sir Charles Lamb, in a suit of black armour, and his esquires, Lord Chelsea and Major MacDowal, attended by retainers in his colours, blue, white, and gold, and more halberdiers, who preceded the lady visitors—Lady Montgomerie, Lady Jane Montgomerie, and others, on horses caparisoned in blue and white silk. Next rode a very gorgeous personage indeed, attired in a magnificent tunic of green velvet embroidered with gold, covered by a crimson velvet cloak trimmed with gold and ermine, having a crown covered in with crimson velvet, and mounted on a charger harnessed with crimson velvet. This radiant individual was a gallant soldier, the English analogue of Ney, for as Napoleon christened the latter the bravest of the brave, so did the Duke of Wellington declare Londonderry the "bravest man he ever saw." The last time the writer saw the gallant marquis was on the occasion of the visit of Ibrahim Pasha to this country, when, to attend an inspection in Hyde-park, the dashing old soldier thought fit to appear as a portly hussar of scarlet hue, like Zamiel on horseback. He was very deaf at that time, and he and Arthur Wellesley rode side by side, roaring in each other's ears, magnificent Londonderry blazing with jewels, and almost putting the modest F.M. costume out of countenance. I do not know whether the brave Stewart was as rotund in 1839 as on the occasion just now referred to, but if he were he must have cut an odd figure in green velvet. After the King of the Tournament rode (or rather was to have ridden) the Queen of Beauty—then Lady Seymour, now Duchess of Somerset—attired in a "robe of violet, with the Seymour crest embroidered in silver on blue velvet, the gorget or upper part of the dress ornamented by a mass of precious stones and gold; a cloak of cerise velvet trimmed with gold and ermine; headdress, a cap covering a part of the neck, barred with gold, each bar ornamented with a row of pearls; and riding on a horse superbly caparisoned, a draped canopy borne over her by attendants in costumes, attended by four petit pages in costly costumes." As a matter of fact, it came on to rain, so violently that only the

horses and attendants of the Queen of Beauty went through it, the lady herself very sensibly driving to the grand-stand in a carriage. Notwithstanding this serious drawback, the show was splendid enough so far as it could be seen through the rain. The Irvine Archers made a brave show in dripping Lincoln green, and the Lord of the Tournament himself, in a suit described as "richly damaskined gilt armour"—whatever that may mean—bore his burden as sturdily as did the Knight of the Griffin, the late Earl Craven, in engraved Milanese armour; the Knight of the Dragon, the celebrated Marquis of Waterford, in polished steel armour of German make; the Knight of the Black Lion (there is an odd ring as of tavern signs about these titles), Lord Alford; the Knight of Gael, whatever that meant, Lord Glenlyon; the Knight of the Dolphin; the Knight of the Crane; the Knight of the Ram; the Knight of the Swan; the Knight of the Golden Lion; the Knight of the Stag's Head. Is it possible that the noble bearers of these dignities wore them in happy obliviousness that their titles were no longer associated with battles but with beer? Perhaps they did not see anything to laugh at, for humour is a quality which requires cultivation, and—it sounds as if of a period before the flood—there were no comic papers in those days. Oh that there had been! Imagine "our own artist" on the spot, and the "special" mixing his oil and vinegar deftly together, so as to leave the noble performers in doubt as to whether he is admiring or laughing at them. Able editors thirty-eight years ago did not allow much latitude to their scribes, and moreover the graphic style had only just been invented, and had not yet filtered into journalism. The scribe of the period merely gives the programme of the procession, adding that it entered the lists at three o'clock amidst a "doling shower." As soon as it appeared, a cry against the umbrellas, which gave the assembled crowd the appearance of an army with overlapping shields, arose, and the last protection against the driving storm was lowered. The hearts of the damp spectators, perhaps owing to the sustaining properties of whisky, beat high as the knights paraded around; but spectators of thrifty mind bewailed the awful damage to the silk attire, the velvets, plumes, and other chivalric paraphernalia. The knights were supposed to be waterproof, and bore

themselves bravely in the various courses run during the moistest of all possible afternoons. At last the field became a swamp; the plumes of the knights were all bedraggled, the trappings of their horses were wet through, and clung dismally to those ill-used coursers, and the drier people in the grand-stand began to make bets as to whether certain knights yet abode in their armour, or had been washed out of it, leaving but the steel husk remaining. The ladies in the more exposed part of the galleries were almost as badly off. For a while they bore the pelting of the storm like heroines, but at last retired in pitiable plight, their hats washed out of shape, their ringlets flattened to their rougeless cheeks, and their dresses hanging on them like bathing-gowns. At last the awning over the grand-stand yielded and the water poured in, quickly putting the inmates to flight. To crown all this misery the dreadful news was announced that the banquet and ball, which should have concluded the proceedings of the first day, could not take place, as the rain had rendered itself master of the temporary buildings, and the banqueting-hall was at least a foot deep in water. The contemporary historian is silent as to the evening of that fearful day.

Thursday was devoted to the repair of damages, and the rain having ceased, an attempt was made to make the banqueting-hall habitable. In it took place various matches afoot, the combatants being attired in mail. One of these is worth recollection. It was a regular set-to with singlesticks, between a "very young gentleman," Mr. Charteris, and that Prince Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, who lived to make the world beyond Eglinton Castle hear of his deeds. Prince Louis did not shine in the singlestick combat—the honours being with Mr. Charteris—and came off almost as badly in four or five slashing bouts with the broadsword, his opponent being this time Mr. Charles Lamb. Both combatants were encased in complete armour, and were vociferously applauded by the audience, all in high good humour at the prospect of a day's out-door tilting on the morrow.

For that one day, tilting, banqueting, and dancing, all came off according to the programme. The procession advanced, this time in due order, to the intense delight of the spectators. The Marquis of Waterford, however, excited much curiosity and no little laughter, by bring-

ing in his train one personage dressed like a palmer, with staff and scallop-shell, and another mysterious creature clad in a spacious rustling white surplice, and decorated with flowing beard and locks. Conjecture was exhausted as to the meaning of this strange entity. As he carried a bottle to refresh himself withal, it was imagined he must be intended for Friar Tuck, while others insisted that he must be the family harper, the bard of the Beresfords. At the tilting, Lord Glenlyon and the Earl of Eglinton shone conspicuously, as did the Marquis of Waterford and Lord Alford. The two latter knights, finding the mêlée a dull affair, broke through all rules and regulations and fell to pell-mell, until the Judge of the Peace rode up and stopped the bout. There was only one drawback to the fun of the day, and that was the jester. In an unhappy moment it had been decided that a tournament without Wamba would be a failure absolute and complete, and a jester was provided. His costume was magnificent, his cap and bells perfect, and he presented a gay spectacle as he rode to the lists on a mule. But when he began his jokes he soon cleared a ring. Nobody knew exactly who he was—whether a local witling or a clown imported from a metropolitan theatre. The industrious scribe recounts one of his jokes, adding in the classical style affected forty years ago, “*ex uno discere omnes.*” “This is a spectacle worthy of the days of Chaucer,” quoth he; “did you ever see Chaucer?” “No, sir,” answered someone. “Then,” said the jester, taking a piece of bread from his pocket, and proceeding to masticate it, “here you see chaw, sir.” “Pray, sir,” then asked one of the spectators, “have you done anything you are sorry for?” The reply being in the negative, “Why, then,” asked the former, “are you so sorry a jester?”

All this failed to bring down the thunder, lightning, and rain, but on the following day the storm arose, and the tiltyard was abandoned for good and all; the guests of Lord Eglinton soon after taking their departure, many making for Doncaster to see the memorable meeting between Charles the Twelfth, Euclid, and Bloomsbury. In the record of superb and costly failures, the Eglinton tournament deserves the first place. The only thing real about it was the hearty welcome and splendid hospitality of Lord Eglinton himself; in every other respect

it was a failure, for, apart from the weather, the tilting, despite previous practice at St. John's-wood, was ridiculous. Perhaps never was so little amusement provided for so much money. This same costliness is not very likely to commend a tournament to the consideration of the youth of to-day, whose prominent vice is surely not profusion. It is well, therefore, that the projectors of modern tournaments should learn the cost of the last great effort made to restore the games of chivalry, before attempting to graft them on a ladies' club and promiscuous kettle-drum.

## DOUBLEDAY'S CHILDREN.

BY DUTTON COOK,

AUTHOR OF “YOUNG MR. NIGHTINGALE,” “HOBSON'S CHOICE,” &c. &c.

BOOK IV. THE FURTHER CONFESSION OF DORIS.  
CHAPTER VII. REHEARSAL.

I WAS struck by the very youthful looks of my fellow-players. The representatives of the characters of Modus, Heartwell, Tinsel, and some others, were little more than school-boys. They were greatly troubled always about their costumes, the proper paint to apply to their faces, and as to whether they should or not pad their calves. Clifford was to be personated by a clerk in the State Paper Office, whose real name was Frank Martin, but who was described in the play-bill as Mr. Hubert Fitz-howard. In his case, there was an additional anxiety. He vexed himself, and he wearied others, with questions touching his whiskers. Now, ought he really to shave them off? Was it certain that they did not harmonise with his ample wig of Charles the Second's pattern? Could they not be hidden beneath the curls of the wig? Poor Mr. Martin! His whiskers seemed very dear to him, although they could hardly have been friends of very long standing. They had grown abundantly; but he was a very young man.

The character of Helen was assigned to a Miss Adelaide Drelincourt, whose real name was Eliza Parkins. She was not without some experience of the stage, for she had figured, as I learnt, at a London theatre, as a member of the corps de ballet. But she was ambitious of appearing in what she called “speaking parts.” Her chief difficulties in this respect arose from the cockney tones of her voice, her habits of mispronunciation, and her capricious

dealings with the letter H. It was understood, however, that she had greatly benefited by Mr. Hooton's teaching. She was a comely-looking, good-natured girl, very uneducated and unrefined; her wide mouth wore a perpetual smile, that set her large white teeth flashing, and she indulged in giggles that convulsed her whole frame; she flirted in a very frank way with the other players, and was only ill at ease in regard to the redness of her hands. It was in vain she coated them with a sort of whitewash, composed of a solution of bismuth; the brightness of their natural hue could hardly be suppressed, but gleamed through the scumble of cosmetic. The red had acquired a livid purple tone; it was not wholly overcome.

At rehearsal, I was struck by the fact, that the performers knew very little of their parts, while all were confident that they should be "letter perfect" when the hour of representation arrived. Further, it was to be noticed, that each of the actors viewed himself as the most important figure in the exhibition, and held that his assured success would bring about the prosperity of his colleagues. Over all presided Mr. Toomer Hooton, blandly surveying his pupils, pitying their inexperience, sympathising with their aspirations, and thoroughly satisfied that any favour shown to the entertainment would arise entirely from his own masterly rendering of his favourite character of the Hunch-back.

Would anyone come to see us act? I was tempted to enquire. But on this head there seemed to be no misgiving. A conviction prevailed, indeed, that our exertions would be noticed by the public press, and that generally the eye of London would be upon us. It was whispered that managers, both metropolitan and provincial, had sometimes attended the performances of Mr. Hooton's pupils, and had forthwith offered very lucrative engagements to the more promising players. And then the actors freely distributed tickets of admission among their friends and acquaintances. It was thought desirable that the house should be full, although few of the spectators might pay for their places. I was in despair, when I remembered the limited number of my friends. Who would applaud me, I asked? For it was not a question of deserving applause, and in such wise obtaining it. There was need of a display of artificial enthusiasm on my account, if only that I might not

seem to be less esteemed by the public than were my fellow-players.

"Have you got your words, Miss Delamere?" enquired Miss Drelincourt. "It's a horrid lot—I mean a horrid lot—to learn, isn't it? And I always had such a wretched memory; indeed, all our family always had wretched memories. And then, Mr. Bolingbroke is really a dreadful stick. He is not at all equal to such a part as Modus, and ought not to be allowed to play it. He says himself that his line is low comedy, and, of course, Modus isn't a low comedy part. I know he'll ruin all my business. He's very proud of his by-play, but it's mere buffoonery to my thinking, and he spoils every point of my best scene."

"I'll do my best, Miss Delamere, I'll promise you that. But I am afraid you'll find me very awkward," Mr. Hubert Fitzhoward, otherwise Frank Martin, candidly owned. "Anything you want done, if you'll only let me know, I'll honestly try and do it. Or, if there's anything that you'd rather I did not do, I'll endeavour to leave it undone. I hope to get through Clifford tolerably well, but I hope also not to inconvenience you in any way. But I have never had much practice at this sort of thing, and I can't help feeling dreadfully nervous."

"I think we shall all be nervous enough when the night comes, Mr. Fitzhoward."

"Fitzhoward? I beg your pardon. Really, I'd forgotten that was my name, for the moment. And I'm in such a bewildered state just now, that to be addressed by a name I've no strict title to quite startles and upsets me. Would you mind calling me Martin—Frank Martin? that's what people commonly call me, and the name I usually answer to, as they say of the dogs that are advertised for. You see, Miss Delamere, I am, in truth, very little of an actor, and I don't think I am likely to make any great mark on the stage either as Sir Thomas Clifford or as Sir Anybody Else. But I spend my Christmas holidays at an old country house in Hampshire, and the people there, dear old friends of mine, are really mad about private theatricals, and they grow worse and worse every year. Now I've stood out of it all for a long time; but, at last, I find myself fairly drawn into it, as though it were a whirlpool. For there's a young lady there who thinks she can play Julia; I don't believe she can, to tell you the honest truth; but I know that she's

the most charming of her sex, if you'll forgive me for saying so in your presence, Miss Delamere, and make allowance for me; the fact being that I am desperately in love with that young lady, and her most devoted slave in every respect. That being the case, could I allow anybody else but myself to play Sir Thomas Clifford to her Julia? You will admit that I could not, and so I've taken lessons of Toomer, for naturally I want to appear to the best advantage. That I shall get on quite well enough in Hampshire I haven't a doubt; the only question is whether I shall be able to play Clifford here in London without giving you a great deal of trouble, and distressing you much by my serious imperfections as an actor."

Mr. Martin was the most diffident and modest of our number, very kindly and obliging, but certainly he possessed little skill as an actor, less even than he professed. For his opinion of himself was not, I think, quite so humble as he pretended. I detected at times in his performance symptoms of ambition and of self-admiration of a decided kind. I am sure, moreover, that he depended greatly upon the effect he was likely to create in the old Hampshire country house by his appearance in the part, and the picturesque costume of Sir Thomas Clifford. He took delight in his symmetrical silk-stockinged legs; and his whiskers, if they were somewhat of a care to him, were scarcely less a joy and a pride. He was a good-looking, pleasant young man, with a certain graceful simplicity of manner; and in the course of our rehearsals Mr. Martin and I became very cordial friends.

Was I nervous? At times a feeling of faintness came over me, and I was sick at heart, with icy cold hands and an aching, burning forehead. But I laboured to repress any weakness of that sort by sheer force of will; I determined to be brave and to succeed, if that were possible to me. I despised myself when I found fear stealing over me. I tried to gain strength by dwelling upon the object of my exertions. It was for "our home"—"our home," I assured myself again and again. It had become clear to me that I must toil to help Paul, that he needed help, that a share of the burthen of supporting "our home" rested upon my shoulders.

"You're not frightened?" said Miss Drelincourt.

"No, I don't feel frightened."

"Well, you have nerve! But you

may find the difference when night comes. You're such a novice, you see, you don't know half the trouble you've got before you. Why, I've seen some of them quite old stagers, too, very much upset on the first night of a new play. They've stood in the wings, shivering and shaking so as you might have knocked them down with a feather, and all their words, they thought they'd got so perfect, gone clean out of their 'eads. Wait till night comes; let's see how you manage then."

And Miss Drelincourt giggled, with yet some kindly feeling for my ignorance and inexperience. She had been a ballet-girl, and believed she knew the stage thoroughly.

Basil was far more nervous than I was; far less hopeful of my success. But he was never inclined to be sanguine upon any subject; and he was dissatisfied with my view of the profession of the stage. I should have entered upon it with higher notions, for nobler motives. Anxiety to earn money to buy bread did not constitute a sufficiently urgent motive. And was acting really to be respected as an art? I asked myself, when brought face to face with the tawdriness and the squalor, the tricks and tinsel, the falsity and the littleness of the world behind the scenes. If an art at all, surely it was the lowest and the poorest of the arts. After all, the player is not an inventor, the creator of anything, but simply a translator; he but speaks the words another has writ down for him; he but fills up the outline designed by another hand; he but moves and breathes, frowns and smiles, as another has prescribed—and the poor shifts and devices, the false hair and padding, the painting and powdering, to which he is compelled to resort. The miserable stock-in-trade of mummery and mimicry! Before I had set foot upon it, the stage had become almost odious to me.

And yet I could appreciate the glories of dramatic poetry, its heroic passions, its exquisite creations, its grace and grandeur, its ennobling and exalting influences and properties. I felt myself melt or burn, or thrill or tremble, at the magic waving of the poet's wand. Indeed, it was for this very reason I found something repellent in the presence of the player, with his matter-of-fact craft, his paltry artifices and contrivances, upon scenes completely vivified by the imagination, and certainly needing not the corporeal support he would obtrude. The world's applause would be his, however, almost to the ignoring of the poet.

True, the actor's triumph, for all its brilliance, is for a season only; Time acts the part of Justice, and restores the even balance of things. The player's fame passes away with his generation; he departs, bequeathing nothing to remind the coming ages that he ever existed. The poet, the painter, and the sculptor, may live for ever in their works. The actor's success perishes with him, it is part of himself. His duty done, he withdraws behind the curtain for ever; the applauding hands and voices are idle and mute; all is silence and oblivion.

These were not the thoughts that should have occupied a young aspirant for his trionic honours. Yet they would visit and oppress me. Basil was right, no doubt. I should have been animated by a larger measure of enthusiasm; in such wise I should have been impelled so much the more towards success. Faith upholds and encourages. Devotion dignifies its object. If I could have respected more the task I had set myself, its accomplishment would really have been less difficult to me. And surely there had been, in times past, men and women, noble ornaments of the stage, who had brought to the exercise of their profession cultivated intelligence, refined sentiment, true nobility of life! They had been fully convinced of the elevation of their duties, believed themselves not merely ministrants of pleasure, but worthy of being counted among the instructors and benefactors of society. How I envied them their power of deeming their art a great one, or their blindness in disregarding its littleness!

"Already, you look pale and weary, my Doris," said Paul. "Is your heart giving way? Do you repent this brave step of yours?"

"No. I'm not afraid."

"You dread failure?"

"No. I have screwed my courage to the sticking-place, and I shall not fail."

"Sticking-place? Ah, that is your Shakespeare, is it not? An awkward expression, though. For to stick is to stop, to come to a standstill, to be embarrassed; so I think the dictionary tells us. There must be no sticking-place, Doris. We must organise a 'claque.' We must secure your triumph beforehand. And we will give you a glass of champagne to exhilarate you."

"No. I need to be very cool and collected. I want all my senses about me."

The important day had arrived. I was

to play Julia in the evening. I read my part over and over again. I could hardly speak anything but the words of Julia. I was haunted by the play, and my every utterance seemed somehow to acquire a certain rhythmical quality, to assume almost the form of blank verse. My sentences became inverted and involved to suit the measure; odd Elizabethan terms and phrases came unawares to my lips. For the time, and in a sense, I was the Julia of the play.

Basil had been with me in the morning, and was to return later in the day. He was most anxious to render me all the assistance in his power.

"I am glad to see you so composed."

"Perhaps I am hardly so composed as I seem."

"Ah, your hand burns."

"Yes. I am rather feverish, and terribly thirsty. Give me another glass of water."

We had dined very simply and frugally at three o'clock. My appetite had been of the slightest. We were to have tea at five o'clock. I was, of course, to dress at the theatre. My costume and finery were contained in a large box which I was to take with me. It made me nervous to find Basil so nervous on my account. From his manner and appearance, one might have judged that his début impended, and not mine.

"I am inclined to say with Falstaff: 'I would it were bed-time, Hal, and all well.'"

"Amen," said Basil, with rather a woe-begone smile.

He was conscious that he was chargeable with being something of a wet blanket.

"I think I shall remain in front of the curtain all the evening," he said. "That will be best, perhaps. I am so likely to dispirit you. And should you want me for anything, you can easily send round to me. I shall come to you, of course, when all is over, and the curtain has fallen."

"I suppose Nick will not be there?"

"I think not. He is very angry, as you know, and his prejudices are very strong."

"I don't want him there. He had much better keep away from the theatre."

"You are sure that you have everything you want, that you have forgotten nothing?"

Paul had been out all the afternoon. He had to write his Paris news, and had been gathering materials from his

friends and gossips, his compatriots in Soho. He returned at tea-time, bringing with him some lovely flowers for my hair. He had gone to Covent-garden Market on purpose to obtain them, and had paid a large price for them. It was most kind of him, for he had so much to think of just then. The sprays of stephanotis were perfectly beautiful: just what I wanted.

"So long as you are pleased, dear one," he said, "that is enough; I ask for no more."

Presently he asked: "Your heart still beats firmly, Doris? You are without fear?"

"Almost. I am very anxious, but not afraid; at least, I think not; and I mean to be very brave."

"Poor child! Ah well! we all need to be brave."

"What is the matter, Paul?" I asked. I was struck by a certain change in his voice; and now his face wore an unusually grave look. I had been so busied about my own affairs that I had not noticed before his altered aspect. "Has anything happened?"

"It is nothing, little one," he said. "Something has happened; but we will not speak of it now."

"You have received bad news?"

"Well, yes; some bad news; but good news has arrived also."

"Please, tell me what has happened, Paul."

"Bouchardon has been arrested. The poor Alcide!"

"His life is in peril?"

"No; I do not say that. But his arrest is an inconvenience to him and to his friends. It is discovered that he is not really an English commercial traveller; that his passport does not reveal his true name. It is unfortunate. He cannot buy the French clocks we had need of. He will be released before long, I think; but meanwhile we have to find some other means of knowing what time it is in Paris."

"Poor M. Bouchardon; I am very sorry for him. And your good news, Paul?"

"The king grows more and more unpopular. At the public banquets, no one dares to propose his health. At the theatres, the performances are interrupted again and again by demands for the Marseillaise. The fire is lighted; there is

already a cloud of smoke upon the horizon. We have to wait but a little while now."

I saw that Basil touched him lightly on the arm, and that they interchanged glances.

"Our Basil is right," said Paul; "we should not speak of these things now or to you. Already you have sufficient to occupy and distract you. Fear nothing; we will talk of this French news by-and-by, Doris. For the present, banish all thought of it from your mind. Think only of your part, dear one; of the Julia you are going to personate, and of the triumph that is in store for you."

I was startled by the look of Basil's white, eager face.

"I think we had better be going," he said.

"Our Basil will see you safely to the theatre."

"You are not coming with me, Paul?"

"I cannot. I may not. I have letters to write, of real importance. But I will join you at the theatre as soon as possible. Have no fear, Doris."

"I had so hoped that you would be with me."

"My Doris promised to be brave."

"Your absence is a bad omen, Paul."

"Omens! Let them scare the old women. The young need not fear them."

Laughing he kissed me, and we parted. I went down to the theatre in a cab with Basil.

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